

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2013 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 10
Fall Update # 1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing/ YDFDA, ADF&G

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through July 28 was 388.76, which is above the historical average of 268.10 for that date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE through July 28 is 3.49 which is above the historical median of 1.97 for that date.

Andreafsky River Weir/ USFWS

As of July 28, approximately 2,000 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is well below the historical average of approximately 3,800 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 21 is 58,000, which is above the historical median of 42,000 for this date. The current passage level is above the sustainable escapement goal of >40,000 summer chum salmon.

Pilot Station Sonar Project/ ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through July 28 is approximately 104,029 fish which is below the historical average passage of 106,183 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through July 28 is approximately 469 fish which is above the historical median of 187 for this date.

Anvik River Sonar Project/ ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar project concluded operations on July 27. The preliminary cumulative count was 571,960 summer chum salmon. The current passage level is within the biological escapement goal range of 350,000-700,000 summer chum salmon.

Gisasa River Weir/ USFWS

As of July 28, approximately 1,100 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is well below the historical average of 2,300 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 28 is 79,600, which is well above the historical median of 32,600 for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir/ TCC

As of July 28, approximately 670 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is well below the historical average of 1,000 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 28 is 238,200, which is well above the historical median of 83,000 for this date.

Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/ Zuray

Approximately 2,700 Chinook salmon have been recorded as of July 28, which is well above the historical average of 1,500 for this date. Approximately 2,900 summer chum salmon have been recorded, which is above the historical median of 1,400 for this date.

Chena River Tower/ ADF&G

As of July 28, approximately 1,550 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is well below the historical average of 6,100 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 28 is 7,400, which is well above the historical median of 3,000 for this date. The current passage level is well below the biological escapement goal range of 2,800-5,700 Chinook salmon.

Salcha River Tower/ BSFA

As of July 28, approximately 4,400 Chinook salmon have been recorded, which is well below the historical average of 10,200 for this date. The cumulative count of summer chum salmon through July 28 is 14,200, which is well above the historical median of 6,400 for this date. The current passage level is within the biological escapement goal range of 3,300-6,500 Chinook salmon.

Eagle Sonar/ ADF&G

As of July 28, approximately 18,850 Chinook salmon have been counted which is below the historic cumulative average of 35,600 salmon for this date.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Fall Season Assessment

The preseason fall chum salmon run projection, based on a historical relationship between summer chum and fall chum salmon runs, is greater than 900,000 fish. This level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and subsistence priorities, personal use, and provide a commercial harvest. Fall chum salmon typically enter the Yukon River in erratic fluctuations with large pulses of fish occurring over several days often followed by several days of lower passage. As a result, inseason abundance projections for fall chum salmon are highly variable until approximately the first quarter to midpoint of the run past Pilot Station sonar project, which, on average, occurs July 31 and August 8.

Fall chum salmon entry has been steady with good daily passages observed at Pilot Station sonar. Cumulative passage of chum salmon at Pilot Station is currently tracking with the historical median for July 28. A first group of fall chum salmon entered Yukon River on July 23 and 24 and has passed by the Pilot Station sonar. Fall chum salmon catches in the Lower Yukon River test fisheries have increased during the last several drifts which may indicate a second pulse of fish.

The coho salmon run is expected to be average in run size. Run reconstruction for coho salmon would suggest that an average run size is 200,000 fish. A few coho salmon have been caught in both the LYTF project and in the commercial fishery. The first quarter and midpoint of the coho salmon run past Pilot Station sonar project on average occurs on August 15 and August 20.

Age Composition Fall Season

The fall chum salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through July 27 was 0% age-3, 53% age-4, 45% age-5, and 2% age-6 fish. The average age-4 fish is 57% and average age-5 fish 41% for this date. The sample size was 327 fish for ages and 335 for gender. Females contributed 53% to the samples, which is similar to the average of 52%. The proportion of females in the District 1 commercial catch samples through July 25 were 45% and the dominant age class is 58% 4-year olds.

Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing

Four commercial fishing periods have been announced in District 1, and three periods in District 2. District 1 commercial fishermen can expect to fish on a Monday and Thursday schedule, while District 2 fishermen can expect to fish on a Wednesday and Sunday schedule. When possible, the department may adjust the timing of the commercial periods as pulses of fall chum salmon are moving through each district. Additional commercial fishing periods will be dependent upon inseason run strength assessment.

Preliminary harvest information for District 1:

Period #2: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 9 hours (3:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight July 22), remainder of District Y-1, 6 hours (6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight July 22). Preliminary verbal reports indicate a harvest of 15,933 fall chum salmon and 102 coho salmon.

Period #3: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 9 hours (3:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight July 25), remainder of Y-1, 6-hours (6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight July 25). Preliminary verbal reports indicate a harvest of 5,789 fall chum salmon and 94 coho salmon.

Period #4: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 6 hours (6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight July 29), remainder of District Y-1, 6 hours (6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight July 29). Currently there is no harvest to report.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 1 through July 25 is 25,546 fall chum salmon and 196 coho salmon.

Preliminary harvest information for District 2:

Period #2: District Y-2, 6 hours (2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. July 24),
12,231 fall chum/82,947 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 50 coho/352 lbs. (\$1.00/lb).

Period #3: District Y-2, 6 hours (2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. July 28),
6,157 fall chum/43,644 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 95 coho/549 lbs. (\$1.00/lb).

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest for District 2 through July 28 is 30,369 fall chum salmon and 156 coho salmon.

Summer Season Assessment

Based on the assessment information to date, the Chinook salmon run is poor. Cumulative passage at the Eagle sonar near the Canadian border is approximately 19,000 Chinook salmon. This is well below the historical cumulative average of 35,000 Chinook salmon for this date. The third pulse of Chinook salmon should reach the Eagle sonar in the next few days. A comparison of historical run timing at the Eagle sonar and the 2013 run timing at the sonar near Pilot Station and Rapids Test Fish Wheel indicates that the first quarter point at the Eagle sonar was approximately July 20 through July 21, while the median was July 23 through July 25. These dates are preliminary until the project is completed. Based on passage at the sonar located near Pilot Station, the 2013 Chinook salmon total run size is projected to end near the middle of the preseason outlook range of 98,000 to 142,000 salmon. However, low passage at the Eagle sonar to date suggests a lower run size than was initially expected. Based on the Eagle sonar estimated run timing, the preliminary projection at Eagle sonar for Chinook salmon passage is approximately 29,000 to 38,000, which is below the Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500 to 55,000 adopted by the joint US-Canada Yukon River Panel.

Currently, all escapement monitoring projects for Chinook salmon (E. F. Andreafsky River weir, Gisasa River weir, Henshaw Creek weir, Chena River tower, and Salcha River tower) have estimated passages well below the historical averages for this date. However, the escapement goal of 3,300 – 6,500 for Salcha River was achieved on July 26 and approximately 4,400 Chinook salmon have been counted at the tower as of July 28. The E.F. Andreafsky River escapement goal of 2,100 – 4,900 was nearly met with a cumulative passage of approximately 2,000 Chinook salmon as of July 28. High water early in the summer delayed installation of the weir and it is possible some early Chinook salmon were missed. Aerial surveys are planned for the Nulato, Anvik, East Fork and West Fork Andreafsky Rivers in the next week. Due to the overall low run size, escapements are expected to be lower than historical averages in some or most escapement streams.

Summer chum salmon passage through July 18 at the sonar located near Pilot Station is estimated at approximately 2.7 million salmon, which is well above the historical median of 1.8 million for this date. Chum salmon genetic samples processed from June 13 through July 18 collected at the sonar test fishery indicate that stocks represent approximately 80% lower summer stocks, 18% middle summer stocks and 2% fall stocks.

The escapement goal of at least 40,000 summer chum salmon at the E.F. Andreafsky River was achieved on July 10 and had an estimated passage of approximately 61,000 salmon through July

28. The Anvik River goal of 350,000 – 700,000 summer chum salmon was achieved on July 9 and had an estimated passage of approximately 565,000 salmon through July 26. The preliminary total summer chum salmon run is estimated to be approximately 3 million salmon, which exceeded the preseason outlook estimate of 1.5 – 1.8 million.

Summer Season Management

All assessment information points to a very weak Chinook salmon run. Despite taking extensive conservative measures throughout the drainage, current projections indicate that it is unlikely that the escapement objective to Canada and some of the Alaskan escapement goals will be met. However, on a brighter note, conservation actions may result in improved escapement quality with a higher proportion of larger female Chinook salmon passing to the spawning grounds this season. ASL information recorded at escapement monitoring projects will be reviewed post season.

During the past week, subsistence salmon fishing closures were continued in Subdistrict 5-D to protect the Canadian component, while the Tanana River was closed to conserve the Chena River stock. It is likely that subsistence fishing will remain closed in Subdistrict 5-D through the end of the Chinook salmon run.

The summer chum salmon run is nearly complete in the mainstem Yukon River. The Tanana River summer chum salmon run appears to be strong as indicated by passage estimates at the Chena and Salcha River towers which are above the historical medians. Commercial fishing opportunity will continue to be provided in District 6 to target summer chum salmon.

Summer Season Commercial Fishing

Districts 1 and 2 Commercial: The summer season commercial fishing season in Districts 1 and 2 has closed. The preliminary total commercial harvest in District 1 (all gear types) is 207,079 summer chum salmon with a reported 300 Chinook salmon caught and released alive, and 142 Chinook salmon caught but not sold. The preliminary total commercial harvest in District 2 (all gear types) is 171,272 summer chum salmon with 628 Chinook salmon caught and released alive, and 244 caught but not sold.

This is the highest commercial summer chum salmon harvest in the Lower Yukon Area since 1989.

Subdistrict 4-A Commercial: The summer season commercial fishing season in Subdistrict 4-A has closed. The preliminary total commercial harvest in Subdistrict 4-A is 96,046 summer chum salmon with a reported 100 Chinook salmon released alive.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B Commercial Fish Wheel: Four 42-hour commercial periods have been scheduled in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B. Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operations and all Chinook salmon caught in the fish wheels must immediately be released to the water alive.

Period #2 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 22, until 12:00 noon Wednesday, July 24. Preliminary verbal reports indicate a harvest of 880 summer chum salmon with 39 Chinook salmon caught and released alive.

Period #3 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 26, until 12:00 noon Sunday, July 28. Preliminary verbal reports indicate 1,620 summer chum salmon were harvested with 23 Chinook salmon caught and released alive.

Period #4 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 29 until 12:00 noon Wednesday, July 31. Currently there is no harvest to report.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B through July 28 is 2,739 summer chum salmon with a reported 82 Chinook salmon caught and released alive.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:

For the current subsistence schedule please call **(toll free): 1-866-479-7387 or in Fairbanks call (907) 459-7387**. The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: Subsistence salmon fishing in the entire Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Districts 1 and 2: Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 1 and 2 is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial salmon fishing period and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

District 3: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

The current subsistence salmon fishing period in Subdistrict 4-A will close as scheduled on Tuesday, July 30 at 6:00 p.m. Subdistrict 4-A will then reopen at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 31, and remain open until 6:00 p.m. Sunday, August 4. After that, Subdistrict 4-A will be on a 5 day per week subsistence salmon fishing schedule with fishing open from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays through 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Beginning **12:01 a.m. Saturday, August 3**, the use of subsistence **drift gillnet gear** will be allowed during subsistence fishing periods in the portion of Subdistrict 4-A upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby):

The current subsistence period in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C which was scheduled to close at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 30 will instead remain open until 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 2. After that Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will be on 5 day a week schedule from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 Fridays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C: (from Illinois Creek upstream to regulatory markers 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek): This area includes the communities of Tanana and Rampart as well as the area near the Yukon River Bridge.

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C consists of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less and Chinook salmon may be kept when caught in fish wheels.

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed in all portions of Subdistrict 5-D and will remain closed until further notice.

The department will notify fishermen by July 30 concerning the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in Subdistrict 5-D.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

The next subsistence salmon fishing period in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B which was scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 26, will be closed to conserve Chinook salmon. The regular subsistence fishing schedule in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B will resume beginning 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 29.

The department will notify fishermen by July 31 concerning run status and subsistence fishing schedule for Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B.

Subdistricts 6-C (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use salmon fishing in Subdistrict 6-C is currently closed and will remain closed until further notice to conserve Chinook salmon.

Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Old Minto area is currently closed and will remain closed until 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 29. Subsistence salmon fishing in the Old Minto Area will reopen for the remainder of the scheduled period from 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 29, until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 31.

The department will notify fishermen by July 31 concerning the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in Old Minto Area.

Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures throughout the drainage, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320 or in Fairbanks at 459-7274. The Emmonak ADFG office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.